

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9213
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 19686

LIMDIS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS/ PFOR, ASEAN, E
SUBJECT: US/ASEAN RELATIONS

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 9379 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR HAS WRITTEN A WELL-REASONED AND
THOUGH-PROVOKING ANALYSIS OF US/ASEAN RELATIONS.

2. WE WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS OURSELVES TO THE TWO MAJOR
POLICY QUESTIONS RAISED BY KUALA LUMPUR. THE FIRST INVOLVES
THE DIRECT CONFLICT BETWEEN OUR POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS IN
SUPPORT OF ASEAN AND OUR INABILITY TO BE FORTHCOMING ON
SPECIFIC ISSUES OF CENTRAL CONCERN TO ASEAN. SOME OF
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THESE ISSUES ARE PART AND PARCEL OF OUR GLOBAL POSTURE
ON THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE (STABEX, COMMON FUND)
WHILE OTHERS RUN COUNTER TO THE RISING PROTECTIONIST
SENTIMENT IN THE UNITED STATES (FOREIGN INVESTMENT,
OPIC, TRADE). IT MAY THEREFORE BE PRUDENT THAT WE
START TO MODERATE OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND TRY TO
DAMPEN UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FROM ASEAN. EMBASSY

CANBERRA RECOMMENDED IT IN ITS 7730, AND THE THAI SECRETARY GENERAL FOR ASEAN AFFAIRS ALSO SAID SO IN HIS LOW-KEY MANNER (BANGKOK 31808).

3. FOR BETTER OR WORSE, HOWEVER, WE STARTED OFF OUR DIALOGUE WITH ASEAN ON THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, AND THE ASEAN SPOKESMAN WAS NO OTHER THAN THE MOST SENIOR AND PROMINENT FOREIGN SECRETARY OF THE REGION. IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT THE NEXT MEETING IN WASHINGTON BE OPENED, IF NOT HOSTED, BY THE SECRETARY HIMSELF. EVEN APCAC, IN ITS RESOLUTION II AT ITS SYDNEY MEETING, STRONGLY RECOMMENDED IN EFFECT THIS COURSE OF ACTION.

4. AS FOR THE SECOND QUESTION OF INTRODUCING NON-ECONOMIC ELEMENTS INTO THE USXASEAN DIALOGUE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO SUCH A USG INITIATIVE AND, INDEED, MAY INTERPRET IT AS A CLUMSY MOVE TO REVIVE ANOTHER SEATO -- WITH ALL ITS NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS. THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE SCRUPULOUSLY MAINTAINED THAT ASEAN IS A VEHICLE FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, AND HAVE TAKEN GREAT PAINS TO INSURE THAT THERE IS NO POLITICAL OR NON-ECONOMIC TAINT TO THE ORGANIZATION. THERE ARE GOOD AND VALID REASONS FOR THIS DEEPLY HELD ASEAN CONSENSUS, WHICH WE OUGHT TO

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RESPECT AND KEEP INVIOLE.

5. OF COURSE, THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS ARE IN CONSTANT CONSULTATIONS WITH EACH OTHER ON POLITICAL AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS. THEY DO SO OUTSIDE OF THE ASEAN UMBRELLA, BILATERALLY AND SOMETIMES SERIALY. WE SHOULD DO LIKEWISE.

6. ASEAN IS STILL IN THE DEVELOPING STAGE. NONETHELESS, IT HAS ALREADY DEVELOPED A SENSE OF COMMON PURPOSE AMONG OUR FRIENDS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA WHICH IT IS IN OUR INTERESTS TO ENCOURAGE. WHERE WE CANNOT AGREE WITH THEIR PURPOSES WE SHOULD NEVERTHELESS ENDEAVOR TO CONTINUE AN EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE AT LEVELS WHICH CONFIRM OUR RECOGNITION OF ASEAN'S IMPORTANCE.

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